

# KATHERYN SHIELDS

JACKSON COUNTY EXECUTIVE

JACKSON COUNTY COURTHOUSE  
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January 23, 2002

**Re: Docket # 01-348**

The Honorable Michael K. Powell  
Chairman  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 – 12<sup>th</sup> St., S.W.  
Washington, DC 20544

Dear Chairman Powell:

I am contacting you to ask your support for the EchoStar/Direct TV merger. The benefits to consumers will mean more programming choices, and competitive pricing. This merger, if approved by the F.C.C. and D.O.J., will provide an excellent alternative to cable TV. Today cable TV controls nearly 80% of the pay TV household market with little or no competition, because of their franchises. Real competition will only keep rapidly growing cable prices down and be an incentive for them to give the consumer better service.

The underserved rural areas will also benefit from the merger because of the potential use of interactive TV and broadband internet access in schools and businesses. The cost to install cable in rural areas is very high, and Direct Broadcast Satellite TV is relatively cheap because it is just a simply matter of hooking a small satellite dish to your TV; the infrastructure is already in place. I encourage you to look at the facts, and I hope you can support this merger.

Sincerely,

Katheryn J. Shields  
Jackson County Executive

*(transcription – original on file; call (816) 561-7555)*